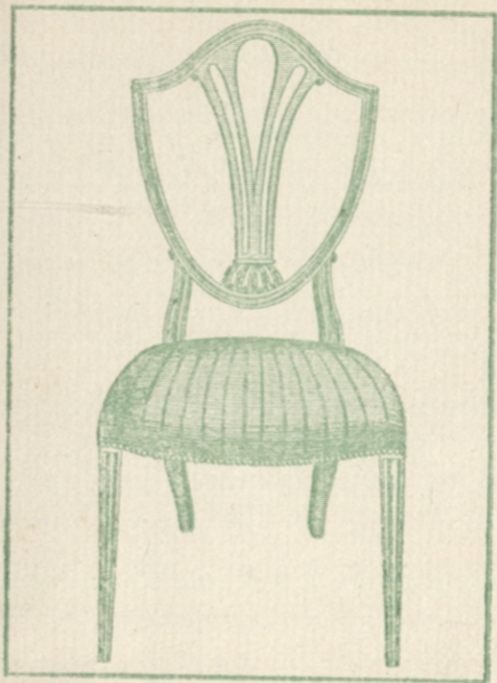


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FAMOUS CABINET-MAKER

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A FAMOUS CABINET- MAKER



Decorative Fabrics of Distinction

STROHEIM & ROMANN

730 FIFTH AVENUE at 57th STREET
NEW YORK

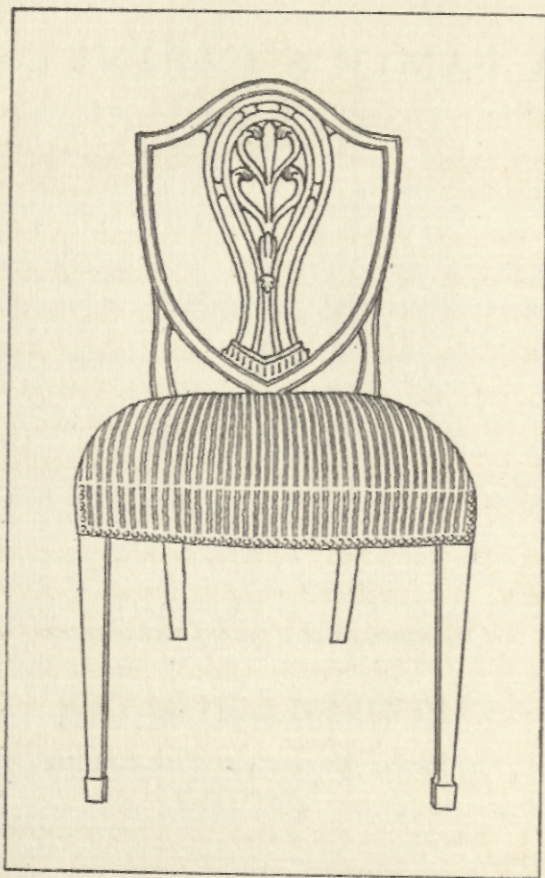
CHICAGO
Heyworth Bldg.

BOSTON
Heyworth Bldg.

PHILADELPHIA
Finance Bldg.

LOS ANGELES
Chillis Block

SAN FRANCISCO
Jewelers Bldg.



The shield-shaped back, square tapering legs and striped fabric are all typical of Hepplewhite.



GEORGE HEPPLEWHITE was one of the most famous of the English cabinet-makers of the 18th century. He shares the distinction with Chippendale, the Adam Brothers and Sheraton of having a style bear his name. Yet almost nothing is known of the life of this distinguished cabinet-maker and designer.

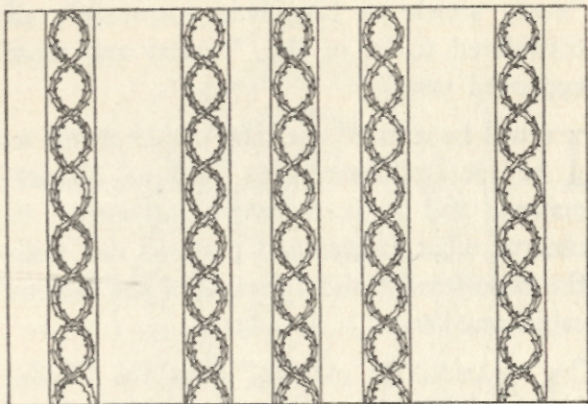
WE know only that he was apprenticed in Lancaster to a man named Gillow; he was established in business in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate; and at his death in 1786 the administration of his estate was given over to his wife, Alice, who continued the business.

WHILE the great creators of style during the Georgian period were not what

might be called originators, they did possess both taste and skill and they knew how to borrow ably and advantageously from their English predecessors and contemporaries, and from French and classic sources.

THE designs of Hepplewhite were evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Many of them are scarcely distinguishable from those of his contemporaries. His square chair-backs suggest Sheraton. His oval backs and tapering legs are similar to those used by Adam. Even the credit for originating the shield-shaped chair-back does not properly belong to the cabinet-maker who so popularized its use that it is always associated with his name.

POSSIBLY Hepplewhite was the first of the makers of furniture to use the three feathers of the Prince of Wales as an ornamental motif. The *Guide* mentions a certain chair as being "executed with good effect for His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales", and this may have accounted for the subse-



A striped fabric which is used on a Hepplewhite chair at the Metropolitan Museum.

quent repeated use of the feather motif. Sometimes it formed the entire splat of a chair. Again it was used as a detail of the design.

HEPPLEWHITE's work is identified with his book, *The Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, which was first published in 1788 by his widow, under the trade name of A. Hepplewhite & Co. The volume contains nearly three hundred designs for

"every article of household furniture", all considered to be of the "newest and most approved taste".

IT will be noticed that the *Guide* claims to be for upholsterers as well as cabinet-makers, and it is therefore interesting to observe what fabrics and patterns met with the endorsement and approval of the famous cabinet-maker.

"MAHOGANY CHAIRS," says the *Guide*, "should have the seats of horsehair, plain, striped, checquered, etc., at pleasure, or cane bottoms with cushions, the cases of which should be covered with the same as the curtains."

FOR japanned or painted chairs, of "a new and very elegant fashion", there should be "linen or cotton cases over cushions to accord with the general hue of the chair". Hepplewhite seems to have been very partial to japanned and painted furniture, apparently because it allowed of "a framework less massy



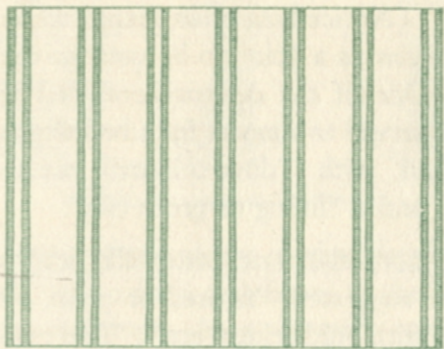
*Design for a pole fire screen
from the Guide.*

than is requisite for mahogany", and also because of the "pleasing and striking effect" which the colored ground produced upon the eye. On the backs of these chairs are "frequently inserted medallions, printed or painted on silk of the natural colours".

WINDOW stools, "peculiarly adapted for an elegant drawing-room of japaned furniture", call for coverings "of taberray or morine, of a pea-green, or other light colour".

POLE fire-screens should according to the *Guide* be variously ornamented with maps, Chinese figures, needlework, etc. Horse fire-screens "may be covered with green silk, needle-work, etc., at pleasure".

DRAPERIES for beds "may be executed of almost every stuff which the loom produces. White dimity, plain or corded, is peculiarly applicable for the furniture, which, with a fringe with a gymp head, produces an effect of elegance and neatness truly agreeable". The text continues, "The Manchester stuffs have been wrought into Bed-furniture with good success. Printed cottons and linens are also very suitable, the elegance and variety of patterns of which afford as much scope for taste, elegance, and simplicity, as the most lively fancy can wish."



“**I**N general,” the *Guide* says, “the lining of these kinds of furniture is a plain white cotton. To furniture of a dark pattern, a green silk lining may be used with a good



These narrow stripes are suggested on chairs and window seats in Hepplewhite's Guide.

effect." (Notice how often Hepplewhite suggests *green* as a color to be used in the fabrics.) One of the designs contained in the *Guide*, served as a model for a bed which was furnished with "dove-coloured satin curtains", and a "lining of green silk".

FOR more elaborate beds, silks and satins are suggested, "figured or plain, also of velvet, with gold fringe, etc.". The vallances to "elegant beds should always be gathered full, which is called a *Petticoat Vallance*". Vallances are often tied up in festoons or the bases of the beds are enriched with festooned drapery. Hepplewhite is likewise partial to swags of drapery in the ornamental carving of his furniture.

As for fabrics patterns which are suggested in the *Guide*, none seems as popular as the stripe. Chairs, stools, window stools, sofas, *confidantes*, *duchesses*, etc. show coverings of narrow striped material, usually plain but occasionally enriched by some motif.



Typical Hepplewhite chair-backs.

MANY of the chairs of the Hepplewhite style, which are shown at the Metropolitan Museum, have striped coverings. Others have horsehair coverings, while one has a seat of needlework with an unsymmetrical floral pattern.

IT is not strange that Hepplewhite should show such a decided partiality for the stripe, inasmuch as his period of activity coincided with the latter part of the reign of Louis XV and the reign of Louis XVI in France, when the vogue of the stripe was so pronounced. Many of the other French fabrics, silks and printed cottons of that period would likewise be appropriate for use upon Hepplewhite furniture.

NOT only was the Hepplewhite style popular in England, following the publication of the *Guide*, but it also was widely admired in our own country, and many of our early cabinet-makers produced furniture along Hepplewhite lines. The distinguishing marks are the square tapered or fluted leg, spade foot, shield-shaped chair-back and the ornamental motifs. Hepplewhite motifs include the wheat ear, bell-flower, urn, festoon of drapery, ribbons, tassels, the Prince of Wales feathers, etc. Painted ornaments also include wreaths, amorini, musical instruments and numerous other motifs.

THE vogue for Hepplewhite furniture is always with us. It seems, however, especially appropriate in a period when Georgian architecture is enjoying such wide popularity.



*The print of the chair on the cover of this booklet
is taken from Hepplewhite's Guide.*



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Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

